

Asheville Transit Committee Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, 3 December 2013

Attending:

Committee Members: Julie Mayfield, Tom Tomlin, Iti Ewart, Bruce Emory

City Staff: Mariate Echeverry, Yuri Koslen, Norman Schenck

Community Members: David Wilson, Vicki Mead, Adam Charnack, Nicole Hinebaugh, Juan Holladay, David Boshart, Olufemi Lewis, Calvin Allen, Joy Harmon, Rick Lee, Nina Christian, Sabrah nhaRaven, Amy Hamilton

Opening of Meeting

Julie opened the meeting at 3:30 and welcomed everyone. Bruce read the Announcement for Public Comment.

Agenda: Julie added an item re January meeting date.

5 November 2013 Minutes: Mariate requested removal of the third sentence under Staff Updates; approved unanimously as amended.

Public Comment I

David Wilson commented on an article by Dale Neal in the 11/18 Citizen-Times, discussing a survey of businesses that indicated that availability of transit service has high importance, especially to potential employers in the County.

Vicki Mead, representing Just Economics, encouraged the Committee to appoint new members that represent the demographic characteristics of transit riders. She specifically recommended Calvin Allen, a long-time bus rider with a strong record of civic involvement.

Olufemi Lewis stated that there was insufficient outreach concerning the current openings; need to have better means of informing potential candidates of openings.

TC Experiences Riding the Bus

Tom and Julie had no specific comments. Iti was pleased with drivers on N3. Bruce observed that N1 and N2 continue to run generally on time. Norman commented favorably on drivers on N1 and N2.

New Business

Survey: Yuri stated that the November survey produced about 400 responses, in addition to 200 surveys previously collected by Just Economics. He is working to get the analysis started; results should be available at the February meeting.

Retreat: Julie suggested, and all concurred, that the next Committee/staff retreat be held a month or two after the new group of members join the Committee.

Structural Changes to Committee: There was discussion about the future size of the Committee, to include the new members tentatively chosen at last month's meeting, as well as possible additional members to comply with new Title VI requirements for diversity. It was agreed that the recent proposal by the Multimodal Transportation Commission for a committee size between seven and eleven members was satisfactory for now.

January meeting: Due to Committee member conflicts, the meeting date was changed to Tuesday January 14.

Old Business

Sunday Service/TMP Alternatives: Mariate presented the fare revenue estimates for the various service improvements, as requested by the MMTTC. The Committee agreed to individually contact City Council members to encourage support for funding some or all of the projects. Julie will contact Esther, Cecil, and Gwen; Tom will contact Jan; Iiti will contact Chris; Bruce will contact Mark. Possible talking points include: need to make the existing service more functional (e.g. problems with C & S4); original TMP implementation was no-cost – additional funding required now to expand service; marketing budget will support all multimodal transportation, not just transit.

Open TC Seats: Mariate reviewed the new FTA Title VI Circular, which requires (starting 7/1/14) that the TC (and the MMTTC) composition reflect the service area demographics. Yuri described current outreach efforts to solicit minority applicants. Several citizens offered comments:

Amy Hamilton stressed the importance of demonstrating diversity, including representation by non-elective riders.

Dave Boshart commented that community members were not adequately informed of the responsibilities of TC membership.

Nicole Hinebaugh stressed the importance of an intentional outreach program.

The Committee agreed to add information to the application form regarding the criteria for selection (as discussed at an earlier meeting) and the responsibilities of membership.

Staff Updates

Mariate discussed the status of projects on the list.

Multi-Modal master planning proposals are due next week.

Staff presented to the PED Committee re alternative improvements on Charlotte Street; staff will work on a RFQ to engage a firm to develop an option that improves pedestrian conditions.

Yuri discussed the schedule changes that will go into effect on January 6th. New timetables will be available soon. Notices will be posted on buses and at the ART Center, and sent out via I-Ride. The Committee suggested posting timetables at the individual bus stops at the ART Center.

Ridership continues to show a small increase over FY2013; year-to date is still below FY2012, but October was higher than both FY12 and FY13.

Public Comment Part II

Calvin Allen suggested expanding the Passport program by having business associations (e.g. along Tunnel Road) sponsor the program.

Juan Holladay presented a request from Buncombe Alternatives, Inc., for their Earn & Learn program, which supports the Buncombe County Dept. of Juvenile Justice. They would like four transit passes to facilitate travel by their clients to court-ordered community service. The Committee agreed to discuss this at the next meeting.

Dave Boshart commented on the need for improved notification regarding holiday service, i.e. which days have or do not have holiday service.

Agenda Items for Next TC Meeting (14 January 2014)

Sunday service/TMP implementation, goals update, new members, TC bylaws & officer elections, request for passes for Juvenile Court program (survey results at Feb. meeting)

Meeting Adjourned at 5:20 pm.